

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 241790

EXDIS TOSEC 551

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, YU

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S VISIT TO BELGRADE: SUGGESTED
TALKING POINTS ON MIDDLE EAST

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

1. YUGOSLAVIA REMAINS TOTALLY IDENTIFIED WITH THE ARAB
SIDE IN THE MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE AND SEEKS TO CONSULT
CLOSELY WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS, ESPECIALLY EGYPT. YOU MAY
THEREFORE WISH TO CONVEY THE BASIC MESSAGE IN BELGRADE THAT
THE ARAB STATES STAND ONLY TO LOSE IF THEY SHOULD (A) DECIDE
TO USE THEIR MILITARY OPTION, (B) FURTHER RESTRICT THE
MANEUVERING SPACE FOR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, OR (C) ALTER
THE PRESENT BASIS FOR ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS BY
ATTEMPTING TO REPLACE RESOLUTION 242 IN THE PALESTINE
DEBATE AT THE UNGA.

2. YOU COULD NOTE THAT:

A. THE UNITED STATES REMAINS COMMITTED TO MAKE
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EVERY EFFORT TO PROMOTE A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST

SETTLEMENT ON THE BASIS OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS
242 AND 338.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT PROGRESS CAN BE ACHIEVED
BY TACKLING IN THE EARLIEST STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS
THE MOST DIFFICULT ISSUES, ESPECIALLY THE PALESTINIAN
ISSUE, THE ISSUE OF FINAL BORDERS, OR JERUSALEM. THAT
APPROACH BETWEEN 1967 AND 1973 PRODUCED NO PROGRESS. A
STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH IN 1974 PRODUCED PROGRESS NOT
ACHIEVED SINCE 1949.

C. WE WILL CONTINUE, IF THE PARTIES DESIRE, TO
MAKE OUR GOOD OFFICES AVAILABLE TO WORK ON A SERIES OF
AGREEMENTS BY WHICH STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD A FINAL
SETTLEMENT CAN BE MADE. HOWEVER, IF THE PARTIES INSIST
THAT COMMITMENTS ON BASIC ISSUES BE MADE BY THE OTHER
SIDE IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS OR IF THEY BEGIN PUBLICLY
DEFINING THEIR POSITIONS IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO MAKE THE
START OF NEGOTIATIONS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE OTHER SIDE,
WE SEE A SERIOUS DANGER THAT THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS MAY
BECOME STALLED. IN THIS CONTEXT, WE FEAR THAT THE RABAT
SUMMIT CONFERENCE DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN HELPFUL.

D. IT IS ONE THING, FOR INSTANCE, TO TAKE THE
POSITION THAT IT WOULD BE AN IDEAL SOLUTION TO THE
PALESTINIAN PROBLEM FOR AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE
TO BE ESTABLISHED ON THE JORDAN WEST BANK AND IN THE
GAZA STRIP, AND THAT THE PLO SHOULD PLAY THE MAIN ROLE
IN ORGANIZING A GOVERNMENT FOR SUCH A STATE; IT IS
ANOTHER MATTER TO IMPLY THAT THERE CAN BE NO PROGRESS AT
ALL TOWARD A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT UNLESS ALL OTHER PARTIES
AGREE IN ADVANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT SUCH A STATE SHALL
BE CREATED, OR TO INSIST THAT ISRAEL AB INITIO RECOGNIZE
THE PLO AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS.

E. ON THIS POINT IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT
THE PALESTINIANS HAVE NOT YET TAKEN THE STEP THAT HAS
MADE POSSIBLE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ARAB GOVERNMENTS AND
ISRAEL. THEY HAVE NOT SIGNIFIED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO
ACCEPT THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL AND TO MAKE PEACE WITH IT.

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THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EQUATION IN RESOLUTION
242. ANY EFFORT TO UNDERMINE THAT POSITION AS A BASIS
FOR NEGOTIATION COULD UNDERCUT THE WHOLE NEGOTIATING
PROCESS.

F. WE SHARE THE GENERAL VIEW THAT A POLITICAL
STALEMATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST PROBABLY COULD NOT LAST FOR
AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME AND THAT THE LIKELY ALTERNATIVE

TO STEADY PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT IS
ANOTHER WAR. THE INTERESTS OF ALL PARTIES WOULD BE HURT.

THE ARABS WOULD NOT BE CLOSER TO REGAINING THEIR TERRITORY,
AND NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY SET BACK.

G. BY ITS RECORD SINCE OCTOBER 1973 THE UNITED
STATES HAS PROVEN TO THE ARAB SIDE ITS DETERMINATION
TO ENCOURAGE POSITIVE EFFORTS BY ISRAEL TO PURSUE A
MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT, AND UNTIL NOW, THE ARAB SIDE
HAS SHOWN A READINESS TO MAKE EQUIVALENT POSITIVE EFFORTS.
WE HOPE THAT THE COMING UNGA DEBATE WILL NOT UNDERMINE
WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED.

H. THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE
EXISTENCE AND SECURITY OF ISRAEL REMAINS FIRM. BUT WE
RECOGNIZE THAT A JUST AND LASTING PEACE MUST ALSO REFLECT
THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF THE ARAB STATES AND OF THE
PALESTINIANS. THE ISSUE IS HOW TO ACHIEVE THIS. WE
SHOWED THAT OUR METHODS COULD PRODUCE RESULTS.
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